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Intelligence Memorandum

Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower Developments in Indochina

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**Recent Communist Logistical
and Manpower Developments
in Indochina**

Although the rainy season dampened the level of activity during the past week, there was continued evidence of both men and supplies on the move.

- Infiltrators destined for northern Laos were detected for the first time since November 1972, but at the same time there was evidence that an element of the 316th NVA Division may be withdrawing from that region.
- In South Vietnam the Communists are making a concerted effort to increase the number of provincial battalions in the Delta and to step up recruiting efforts there.
- Supply activity remains heaviest in southern North Vietnam and northern South Vietnam. In the Laotian Panhandle and Cambodia, however, resupply is being impeded by the seasonal rains. Much of the activity observed there is probably to meet local resupply requirements.
- New road construction that could represent the first phase of an effort to further upgrade and streamline North Vietnam's road system through the Laotian Panhandle has been detected in recent weeks.

Note: Comments and queries regarding this memorandum are welcomed. They may be directed to

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DISCUSSION

Recent Logistical Developments

1. The rainy season's effect on Communist logistical operations in Indochina is increasing. In recent weeks the rains have dramatically slowed activity in Laos and eastern Cambodia and appear to be affecting activity in the northern part of South Vietnam as well. North Vietnamese communications have acknowledged these difficulties. An 8 June intercept from an element of Military Region 559 stated: "At present it is raining. The roads are muddy and the vehicles can't move."

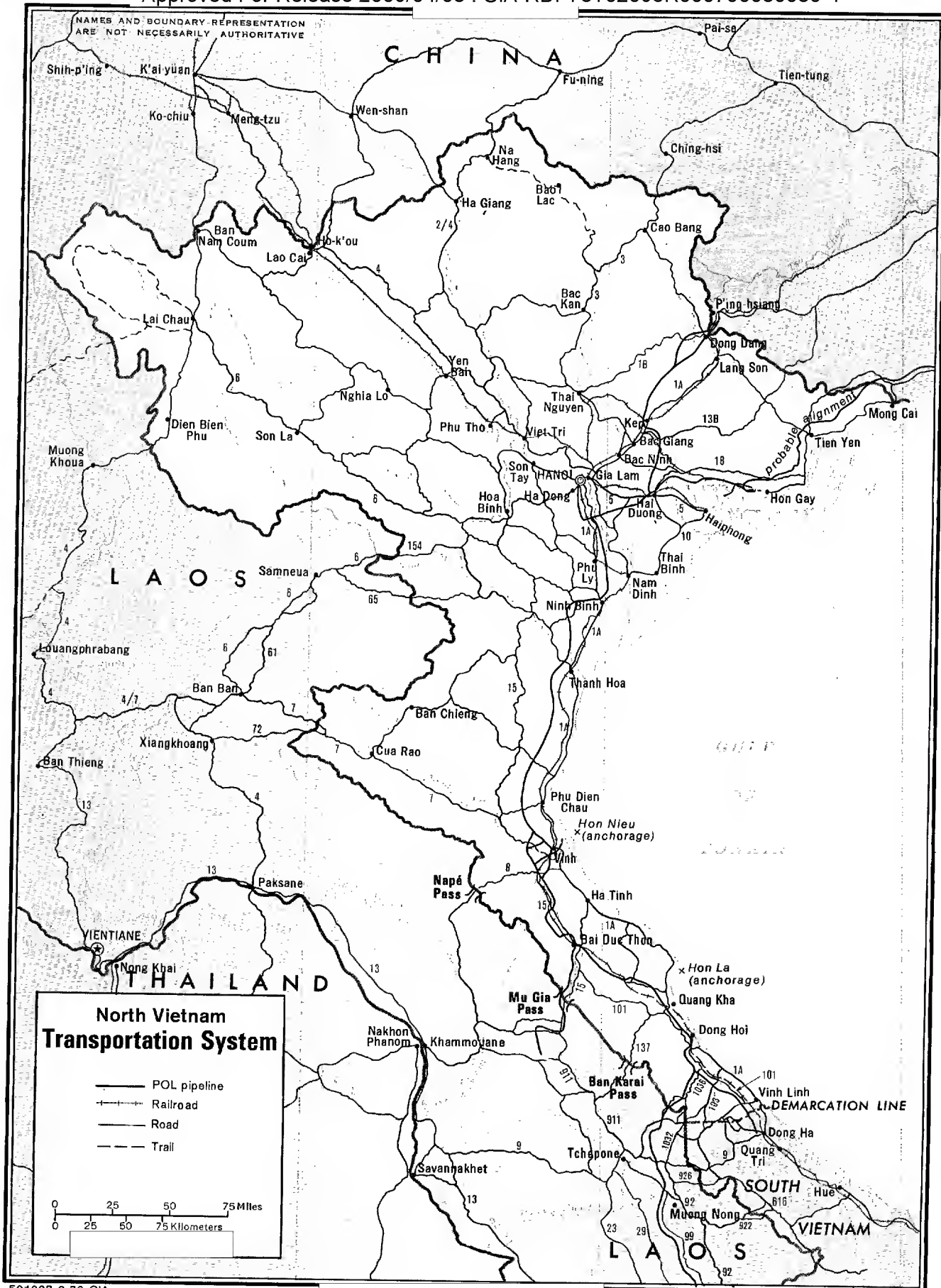
North Vietnam

2. Binh Tram 18, near Vinh, continues to report the frequent movement of small quantities of ordnance through its area. Farther south, in the Binh Tram 26 area around Dong Hoi, heavy vehicle activity is still being noted. Between 5 and 7 June, 122 southbound vehicles transited one of the binh tram's vehicle checkpoints, presumably carrying cargo toward South Vietnam, and a roughly equal number returned north. Tanks still moving through the area were referenced as recently as 8 June when a binh tram element reported that eight T-34s were scheduled to cross a river the next day. A related intercept revealed that some tanks now en route are carrying a two-months' supply of foodstuffs.

Southern Laos

3. In southern Laos, detections of Communist resupply activity were extremely sporadic during the past week. Photography indicates the main flow of traffic continues to be on the central corridor (Routes 99, 9211, and 958), but even that has fallen to a very low level. Most of the activity probably is associated with the local resupply of Communist forces remaining in Laos rather than the movement of supplies through the system toward South Vietnam and Cambodia.

4. Recent North Vietnamese communications from southern Laos have expressed some concern over expected "enemy" combat operations there. A 9 June intercept warned that "the enemy is plotting to destroy us by striking with raider forces in order to discover the caliber of our stores, troop strength, and roads." As a result, Communist logisticians have been directed to prepare adequate defenses against ground or air attack and to camouflage storage facilities.



5. COMINT also has referenced a "road building assault," and an increasing number of active road construction sites have been detected. Most of the new road segments are being cleared and graded to 25-40 feet in width to permit two-way traffic. Median strips have been left between the lanes in some places, and drainage ditches, shoulders, and stream crossings are adequate to provide an all-weather capability. The 14 new road segments which have been identified to date total only about 20 miles (see the South Vietnam map), but this program may well be the first phase of a major construction effort to upgrade and streamline North Vietnam's road system through the Laotian Panhandle.

South Vietnam

6. Recently, an element of Binh Tram 12, which operates in northeastern Quang Tri Province, noted that although the roads were slippery the transportation battalions "stroved as if it were dry." Food, petroleum, and military supply movement continues to be detected in the area, and considerable truck traffic continues in the A Shau Valley/Laos border region. In this connection, a rallier has reported that the Communists recently expanded a large storage facility near the A Luoi airstrip to handle increased fuel deliveries to the A Shau. Photography confirmed that as of [redacted] Route 614 south of the A Shau had been connected with Route 14 at the town of Ben Giang, which a rallier has reported will soon become a major Communist logistics center.

7. In southern South Vietnam the Communists are continuing to build up the area around Xa Mat in northwestern Tay Ninh Province. One source has reported a daily flow of 10 to 20 NVA trucks carrying personnel, food, and supplies into this area during May. The Communists have erected hundreds of new structures south of Xa Mat, partly to accommodate South Vietnamese refugees relocating from Cambodia. In the Delta, several large fishing boats reportedly have been transporting supplies to Viet Cong elements along the coast. The vessels probably picked up their cargoes from Communist-controlled supply areas along the southern coast of Cambodia.

Recent Manpower Developments

Personnel Infiltration

8. During the past week, one regular combat infiltration group -- 9034 -- was detected entering the pipeline in North Vietnam destined for northern Laos. This is the first time since early November 1972 that infiltrators have been noted starting for northern Laos and is a departure from the practice of not sending new combat troops there during the rainy season.



9. Four small special-purpose groups headed toward South Vietnam were detected for the first time during the past week. Three groups were observed starting south in North Vietnam, while the fourth was noted farther down in the pipeline in northeastern Cambodia. Table 1 shows our estimate of infiltration starts since 1 September, by season and destination (excluding northern Laos), and Table 2 lists total starts by week since 1 January 1973.

Table 1

Infiltration Starts, by Season

Destination	1 Sep 71 - 10 Jun 72	1 Sep 72 - 10 Jun 73
Total	128,000	93,000
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	27,000	33,000
MR 5	17,000	9,000
B-3 Front	30,000	14,000
COSVN	38,000	26,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	16,000	11,000

Table 2

**Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973**

	Total¹	Special- Purpose²
1-7 Jan	4,700	400
8-14	3,700	350
15-21	6,100	500
22-28	4,000	150
29-4 Feb	6,300	400
5-11	3,100	250
12-18	2,000	850
19-25	500	500
26-4 Mar	750	750
5-11	1,300	300
12-18	550	550
19-25	650	650

Table 2
Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973
(Continued)

	Total ¹	Special-Purpose ²
26-1 Apr	300	300
2-8	275	275
9-15	500	500
16-22	150	150
23-29	1,000	0
30-6 May	1,775	275
7-13	1,100	100
14-21	2,350	50
22-27	1,825	25
28-3 Jun	225	150
4-10	600	100

1. Including gap-filled groups, except Groups 7001 through 7009. Assuming that these groups departed between 1 January and 10 March, some 4,500 combat troops would be spread over the departures estimated for those weeks.

2. Including those groups which were initially detected without a specific strength but which have been assigned an average strength of 35.

Manpower Developments in South Vietnam

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10. In MR 4, [] the Communists are making a concerted effort to create a number of new provincial battalions. Although many are not yet viable entities, others now reportedly have the necessary cadre and are in the process of acquiring through recruitment the additional manpower needed to become operational. A Communist directive from one Viet Cong province in the southern MR 4 area ordered Viet Cong cadre to recruit at least 865 soldiers during the first six months of this year in order to fill out both existing units and planned new units. To date, we have no evidence about the extent to which this goal is being achieved. In Vinh Long Province, the Viet Cong have reportedly been forcibly detaining youths and indoctrinating them prior to impressing them into service. However, available information indicates that relatively few personnel have been gained by these methods.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

VC/NVA ¹	RVNAF ²	VC/NVA	RVNAF
167,000	287,000	80,000	85,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		320B	1st
		312th ³	2nd
		304th	3rd
		711th	Regional Forces
		2nd	

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. Revised RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes present for duty personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions.

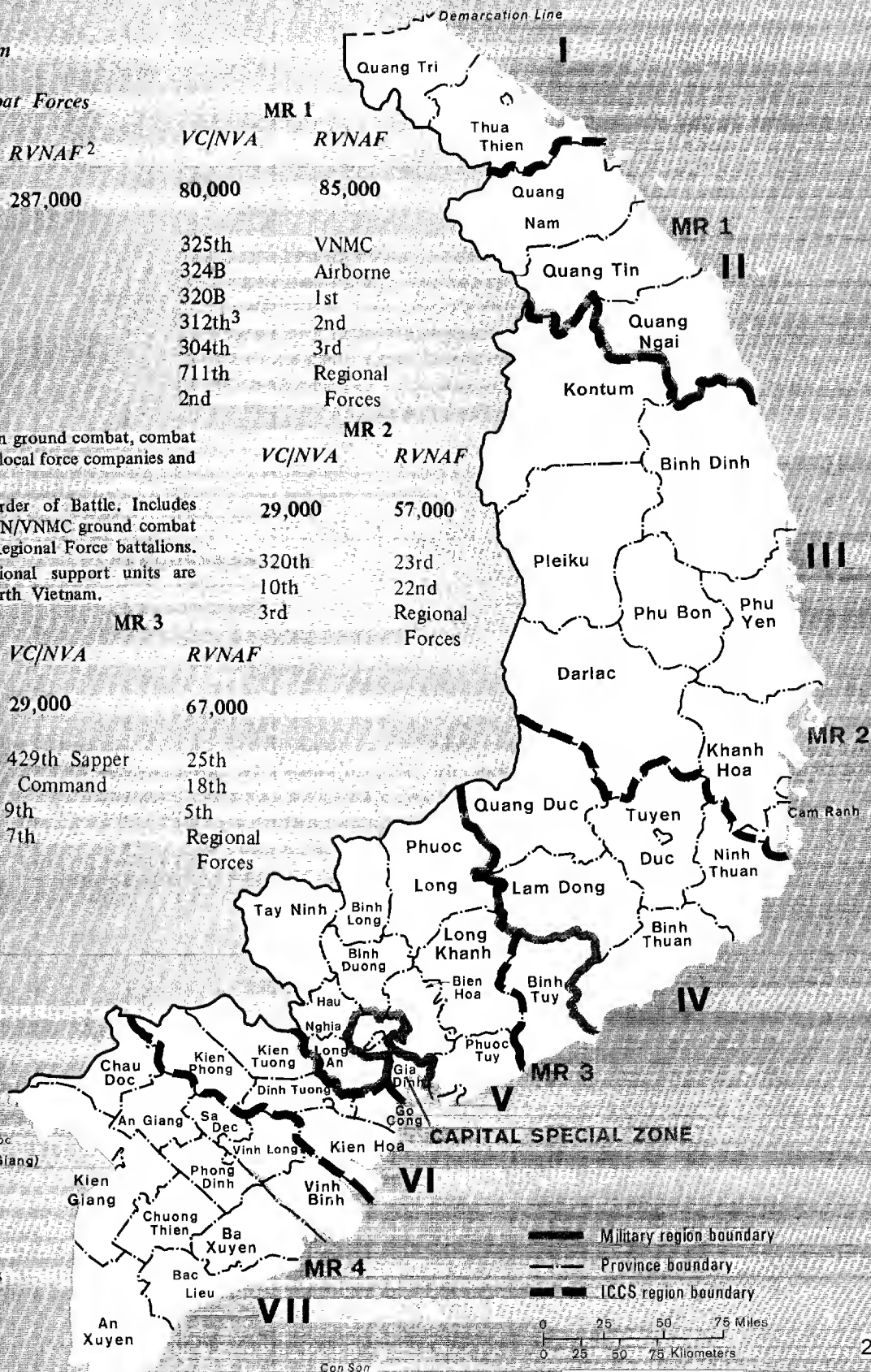
3. The headquarters and divisional support units are currently located deep within North Vietnam.

MR 3

VC/NVA	RVNAF
29,000	67,000
429th Sapper Command	25th
9th	18th
7th	5th
	Regional Forces

MR 4

VC/NVA	RVNAF
29,000	78,000
5th	21st
1st	9th
	7th
	44th Special Tactical Zone
	Regional Forces



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11. In a possibly related development, recent reporting indicates that the Communists are moving to strengthen their political base in the Delta. In Chuong Thien Province, for example, [] about 7,000 people have fallen under Communist control during the cease fire period. In addition, the Provisional Revolutionary Government in An Xuyen Province is trying to consolidate its hold on areas under its control by creating a local government structure as a viable alternative to the South Vietnamese government.

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Manpower Deployments in Laos

12. According to recently available COMINT, an unspecified element of the NVA 316th Infantry Division was to withdraw from northern Laos in mid-May to Nghe An Province in North Vietnam. As of 10 June, however, communications reflected the continued presence of all of the division's major elements in northern Laos. Historically, most NVA combat units are pulled back from their forward positions during the summer rainy months to base areas in northern Laos or in North Vietnam to rest and refit.

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